

Summer Experience Studying Insects on Farms

A Learnership / Student Internship

With the Farmscape Ecology Program, Hawthorne Valley Farm, Ghent, NY

Beginning late May 2024 (3-6 months, exact dates flexible)

Interested in working with insects? Thinking of a career in conservation or agroecology? Enjoy working outside and on farms? If so, consider applying for a summer entomology experience with the Hawthorne Valley Farmscape Ecology Program. During this three- to six-month position, you will get experience collecting and identifying insects while living on a farm in the mid-Hudson Valley of New York. You will also have the chance to be involved in public education and outreach around insects, farming, and their intersection. All we ask you to bring is a willingness to learn, an interest in the topic, an eagerness to help, and a good team spirit; we can train you in techniques. If you already have some entomological background, this position would offer you the chance to deepen your experience.

Who We Are: The Farmscape Ecology Program (FEP) is dedicated to exploring the human and natural dimensions of the landscape in and around Columbia County, NY through research and outreach. The Program is part of Hawthorne Valley Association, an educational not-for-profit, and is comprised of a wildlife ecologist, a botanist, a social scientist, a biologist, an entomology lab manager, a botany technician, and a staff dog.

Our interdisciplinary research explores the many dimensions of the historical, current, and potential future interactions of people with the land. An important part of our work is applied farmscape ecology, which involves documenting synergies between agricultural production and nature conservation, as well as creating, managing, and monitoring experimental on-farm habitats for beneficial wildlife.

For 2024, we are looking for two interns or learners to assist us in monitoring insect life on farms and other lands during our field season. The season will run approximately three months, starting in late May or early June and ending in late August or early September (the exact start and end dates are somewhat flexible). At the end of the summer, if both the intern/learner and FEP agree, there may be an opportunity to extend the position for up to an additional three months in order to help us wrap up our fieldwork and allow the intern/learner to complete an independent project, but that opportunity is not guaranteed. We welcome inquiries from graduate students who feel their projects may fit our research objectives. We would also be glad to collaborate with undergraduate students whose universities offer the opportunity for them to earn independent credit.

Activities: Entomology learners/interns will participate in collecting and processing standardized insect samples as part of our applied farmscape ecology research. The work will involve collecting and processing insects in the field using sweep nets and Malaise, vane, and

pitfall traps. It will be necessary to accurately identify and count both living insects in the field and preserved insects (with the aid of a dissecting microscope) in the lab. We can train these skills. The selected applicants will be responsible for accurate record keeping, including data entry. In addition to helping with our standardized insect sampling, the interns/learners will occasionally assist with other aspects of our work, such as horticultural tasks (e.g., work in our native plant garden and nursery), on-farm habitat management (e.g., weeding in native wildflower plantings, removing invasive plants, and planting shrubs in hedgerows), ecological consulting work (e.g., surveying the fauna and/or flora of a property owned by a private individual or non-profit), bioacoustics research (e.g. using autonomous sound recorders to monitor bats, birds, frogs, and insects), and/or program outreach (perhaps including giving tours of our butterfly house and native plant gardens, posting ecological finds through our social media, or staffing an outreach table). Optionally, the learners/interns also may (depending on FEP and farm schedules) have the opportunity to work with the Hawthorne Valley farmers and farm apprentices in the commercial vegetable fields for ½ day per week.

Qualifications: We are looking for candidates with a strong interest in insects, their conservation, and their role in agriculture who also enjoy the outdoors and interacting with the public. Candidates should be comfortable living and working in a rural setting, be energetic, and thrive in the outdoors even when the going gets rough (think long, hot days in a field without shade!). Given the work environment, it is important that candidates are sociable and communicative, able to interact with a diverse range of people of all ages and backgrounds, self-motivated, and have attention to detail. Most importantly, we are looking for people who are eager to learn. We expect the candidates to have basic computer skills (Word, Excel). Some academic and/or professional experience in field biology, field ecology, natural history, entomology, environmental science, sustainable farming/gardening, environmental education, or related fields is a plus, but not a requirement. A valid driver's license would also be helpful, but again is not required.

Accessibility: We aim to make this position accessible to applicants from diverse backgrounds who are excited by the opportunity, and we encourage people who are under-resourced, BIPOC, or have non-traditional backgrounds to apply. If you have any concerns or questions about the accessibility of this learnership/student internship for your situation, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

General Conditions: The position is based at Hawthorne Valley Farm, a 500-acre organic and biodynamic diversified farm located in the heart of Columbia County, NY. Successful applicants will be expected to work 40–45 hours per week, which will occasionally include hours that are earlier or later than normal work hours and time on weekends.

Compensation: Entomology learners/interns will be provided with housing (a small, private room with a shared kitchen and bathroom) in the Farmscape Ecology Program building and a stipend of \$1,500/month. We don't want finances to be a barrier to taking this position, so upon acceptance, the successful candidates will also be given the opportunity to apply for a need-based scholarship providing up to an additional \$500/month. Please refer to our

scholarship description at <https://hvfarmscape.org/scholarship> to self-assess your eligibility for this additional funding. Additionally, if the learners/interns choose to take the optional opportunity to work ½ day per week in Hawthorne Valley’s commercial vegetable fields, they will be given access to produce from the farm.

COVID-19 Considerations: We take COVID-19 seriously. Those living in the shared apartment will work with one another to determine a COVID protocol that they are all comfortable with. Both living and work spaces have portable hepa air filters, and we make freely available covid tests and N95 masks. We realize this is always a fluid situation, and thus we discuss and confirm office protocols with all staff and interns at the beginning of each field season. We are happy to describe our current approach during the application process.

Additional Information: Information about the Farmscape Ecology Program is available at <https://www.hvfarmscape.org>. To read the mission of our internship/learnership program, please see <https://hvfarmscape.org/internships>. For more information about Hawthorne Valley Association, our parent not-for-profit organization, please visit <https://hawthornevalley.org>.

Application Process: To apply, please send a résumé, a cover letter highlighting why you are interested in this position and any relevant experience you might bring, and contact information for three references.

We will begin reviewing applications on 12 Feb 2024. If you wish to apply after that date, please check our internships web page (<https://hvfarmscape.org/internships>) to assure the position is still available.

To apply or if you have any questions, please contact Conrad Vispo at conrad@hawthornevalleyfarm.org or by phone at (518) 672-7994.